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ABSTRACT

The Wapanakamikok, or Eastern Land People, have been forced to do a great deal of moving about since the beginning of European contact in 1607. The Lenape dialect of their common language is spoken today primarily in Oklahoma and Canada and descendents of Wapanakamikok groups are scattered in Wisconsin and Kansas as well. (The other two dialect groups are the R- and N- or Renape and Nenape groups respectively.) Other Native people have remained near their old homes or have migrated within the North Carolina-to-New Hampshire region, the original territory of the Wapanakamikok. Thus it is not at all suprising to find an organized Renape group in New Jersey, along with other Indian groups from the Hudson River Valley--the Ramapough people--and from Delaware--the Nanticoke group. Although forced to move in many different directions, Renape-Lenape-Nenape people continue to survive and to preserve their identity, whether in rural areas or major industrial centers. In this process of moving about, old republics and alliances have disappeared to be replaced by new groupings such as the "Cherokee Delawares" of northeastern Oklahoma, the Caddo-Wichita-Delawares of western Oklahoma, the Muncey of Kansas, the Stockbridge-Muncey of Wisconsin, the Delaware-Nanticoke component of the Grand River Iroquois in Canada, and many others. The social and political evolution of the Renape-Lenape-Nenape people has not come to an end and the future will bring still more change. (JHZ)

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The Renape People:

A Brief Survey of Relationships and Migrations

by Jack Forbes, Ph.D.

At the time of first intensive European contact, from the 1580's to the 1620's, the Shewanaki (Atlantic Coast) from Pamptico Sound, North Carolina, to New Hampshire was occupied by a single language group. These people, whom I call Wapanakamikok (Eastern Land People), spoke various dialects of the same language, a language belonging to the large Algonkian family. The overall language can be compared with German, while the dialects can be compared with Swiss German, High German, Low German, et cetera.

To the north and northwest were people speaking related but more distantly removed languages, such as Wabanaki (Penobscot-Passamaquddy-Malecite-Abenaki), Shawnee, and Ojibwe-Potawatomi-Odawa. These languages relate to the Wapanakamikok language as Dutch, Danish, Swedish, and Frisian relate to German.

The Wapanakamikok people have been called many different names by the Europeans, such as Massachusetts, Naragansetts, Delawares, Powhatans, Piscataways, Nanticokes, and Pampticos. Many of the dialects are no longer spoken and it is not possible to be absolutely certain about the speech of each community. Nonetheless, the Unami dialect from near present Trenton, New Jersey, and the Minsi dialect from northern New Jersey are still spoken in Oklahoma and Ontario, while vocabularies exist for many of the dialects of North Carolina, Virginia, New York, and New England and many persons are trying to revive several of these.

It would appear that the Wapanakamikok dialects changed gradually from village to village. It would be a mistake to assume that there were exact dialect boundaries, except where a migration had resulted in a new group being located in the midst of older communities. On the other hand, much evidence indicates that Wapanakamikok people shifted about quite a bit after European contact and that they were very much affected by dislocations caused by European epidemic diseases, by the movement of the Catawba, Tutelo and Saponi groups in Virginia and Carolina, by the White Mengwe (Andaste) and Black Mengwe (Cat People or Eries) invasions in Maryland, Delaware, Pennsylvania and New Jersey, and so on. In short, disease epidemics created flights from infected areas and resulting uninhabited zones; and the impact of the fur trade and European guns accelerated movements. Together these things helped to mix up Wapanakamik People, leading to the creation of dialectically mixed regions and new mixed tribes. This process must be kept in mind as one tries to clarify "original" pre-European conditions. The various Wapanakamikok groups had different names for themselves but it would appear that, aside from local names for villages, the most general form of self-identification was to use a form of the term "human being" or "man." The forms varied according to dialect between Renape ("R" dialect groups), Lenape ("L" dialect groups), and Nenape or Ninouk ("N" dialect groups). The use of "R" seems to have been dominant from Pamptico Sound, North Carolina, north to about Camden, New Jersey. The "L" appears dominant along the Pawtuxet (Delaware) River north of Camden. The "R" appears again in northeastern New Jersey and sporadically along the coast as far as Narragansett Bay. Generally, the "N" is dominant from the Hudson River to New Hampshire.

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On the other hand, we must keep several things in mind: (1) the use of L, R, or N is not always a significant characteristic in and of itself, since the dialects show other shifts independent of the L-R-N shift, as from -ent to -et (an ending meaning "having the quality of," as in Pawtuxent, Pawtuxet); from -ak or -ik to -ank or -ink (written -ing by Dutch and Germans), as in Wyoming and Wiomik; or Anakoshtak and Anakoshtank; as from -ak to -ask(a stem) as in Gingaskin and Akokeek; or the dropping of an "n" as from Nantic to Natick.

These various changes are not always continuous. For example, a place-name in central Virginia (Toe-ink) reflects the -ink locative ending as does Pamunkey (Pomaunck or Pomank) and Romancoke (Rom-ank-ok), the latter found both in King William County, Virginia, and on Kent Island, Maryland, and the former found in Charles County, Maryland, as well as in Virginia and on Long Island, New York. On the other hand, the -ak and -ik locative endings are also found in Virginia, as with Cheskoyak. Also the -ask-form appears along the Rappahannock River in the name of Totuskey (Totaski) village.

In general, then, *we must regard each local area as having a somewhat distinctive dialect* with each of these dialects having the possibility of changing gradually due to the internal dynamics characteristic of all languages as well as due to borrowing, merger, migration, and so forth.

Thus, when we speak of Renape or Lenape or Nenape people, we must bear in mind that we are not really speaking of separate dialects, separate political groups, or even a self-conscious sense of ethnicity. We are merely using an "R", an "L" or an "N" to refer to the same, common terms for human being found among the Wapanakamikok groups.

My own studies of the various dialects have led to the conclusion that:

1. Powhatan 'of Virginia' and Natick 'of Massachusetts' are the most closely related of the idioms 'studied' and are probably close enough to be considered as dialects of a single language.
2. Powhatan, Natick and Lenape 'Unami' are close enough as a group to perhaps be considered as dialects of a single language.[1]

I found, as a result of comparing 135 words, randomly selected, that Powhatan, Lenape and Natick, as a group, were 58.5% mutually intelligible while Powhatan and Natick were 71.6% mutually intelligible, Lenape and Natick were 68% mutually intelligible, and Powhatan and Lenape were 66.6% mutually intelligible. These are minimum figures and, in all likelihood, these dialects were at least 80 to 90% the same.[2]

The linguist, J.P. Harrington, stated that Powhatan was "merely a dialect" of Lenape.[3] J. Hammond Trumbull, an expert on the dialects of New England, stated that the "language of the Powhatans was nearly the same as that of the tribes of southern New England . . . the Powhatan and Massachusetts did not differ more from each other than either differed from the Delaware." Two years later he said that "there is less difference between the dialects of New England and the Powhatan of Virginia than between either of these and the 'Leni-Lenape' of Zeisberger."[4]

The unity of the Wapanakamikok dialects is fully born out by the study of place-names which reveals a striking similarity from North Carolina to New Hampshire. Names such as Piscataway, Quantico, Pamunkey, Nantic, Pamptico, Manahak (Monahok), and many others still provide a sense of unity to the region. And many words borrowed by the English language (squaw, persimmon, skunk, mocassin, caucus, sachem, Manito, and others) reflect the common contribution of these dialects.

The Wapanakamikok people were divided politically into a number of relatively small republics or self-governing communities. These republics often consisted in only one major town (otan) but occasionally embraced a group of closely-allied villages. Each republic had a "king" or a group of "Great Men" (or sometimes a "queen" and a group of elder advisors). Under pressure from outsiders these republics occasionally formed leagues, the best known being those of Wahunsenakiw (Powhatan) in Virginia and King Phillip in New England. Contemporary evidence indicates, however, that these leagues or confederations were temporary and that the leaders possessed only

limited authority. Much has been said about the "empire" of Wahunsenakiw in Virginia but even a casual reading of the evidence shows that he was unable to "control" the Paspahek, Weyanok, Chickahominy, Patawomek and other groups located very near to his home villages. The nature of Wahunsenakiw's authority still remains to be studied in a precise and systematic way.

Similarly, the supposed "empires" of the Piscataway of Maryland and of the Nanticokes of the eastern shore, as well as the "unified" Delaware "tribe" must be regarded as developments in response to outside aggression, migrations, and mergers. The earliest documentary evidence simply does not support the existence of such authoritarian political units.

The concept of "tribe" is, of course, a European one and we would be best advised to use terms such as "republic" (for a self-governing state), confederacy or league (for an alliance system), and "nation" (for a larger sense of nationality or ethnicity, however defined in real life by the people themselves).

The earliest European visitors to the region found the use of the term "Renape" to be widespread from the Delaware River south to North Carolina. The plural form "Renapok" was recorded for the latter area in the 1580's and the singular "Renapi" or "Renappi" is consistently used by the Swedish and other visitors to the Delaware River from the 1650's onward.

Peter Lindestrom, writing in 1652-1656, for example, speaks of "our Renappi," "none of our Renappi," "the sewan [shell money] of the Renappies," and also records words using "R" as with "orit" for "worit" or "wulit" (that which is good).[5]
David DeVries, in his 1632 diary, records "rancontyn marenit" as the term for "a firm peace" and also notes tribal names using "R" such as that of the Armewamen of South Jersey.[6] When the Swedes first met with Native leaders in 1638 the latter included Eru Packen and some delegates represented the Ermewormahi (Eriwoms, Arwames, Ermomex, or Armeomeeks, the same as the Armewamen above). These people lived near Gloucester, New Jersey.[7] In a report of 1655 Governor Johan Rising mentions "Our neighbors the Renappi . . .," while William Penn in 1683 refers to many place-names using "R" such as Rancocas and Octorockon.[8]

Early and contemporary maps refer to such republics or places as Raritan (North Jersey) and Naraticon (South Jersey). The latter term is especially interesting since in the "L" dialect it would become Nalaticon and is doubtless synonymous with the famous Unalachtigo (Wonalaktiko) division of the later Delaware grouping.[9]

It is clear also from early vocabularies that the Natives living near the earliest Swedish and Dutch settlements used the "R" and called themselves Renape. Similarly, Virginia vocabularies and place-names leave no doubt that the use of the "R" was widespread throughout that region.

On the other hand, I wish to stress again that the dialects were all related, regardless of the use of "R" or "L". For example, when Captain Thomas Young sailed to the Delaware River from Virginia in 1634 he carried on board an Indian who could speak with the Renape of the former area. This Virginian Indian "understood that language." He, however, could understand "only some few words" of the Mingwe, a totally unrelated Iroquoian tongue.[10]

There is also much evidence for movement back and forth between the Chesepeake-Eastern Shore region and the Delaware River area. John Smith in the early 1600's learned in Virginia of the "Acquanachuke" people living on Delaware Bay. The people in Chesepeake Bay were good navigators and had regular intercourse all about the bay, especially from the Eastern Shore to the Maryland and Virginia "mainlands." Likewise, Lindestrom tells us that in the 1650's the Delaware River Natives sailed to Virginia.

> But when they went [to go] a distance over the sea, as for instance to Virginia or New Holland, then they fasten two punts [canoes, dugouts] together broadwise with timbers over them, right strongly put together, the deck made completely tight and side boards of planks; sails of rugs and frieze [cloth] joined together; ropes and tackle made of bast and slender spruce roots; [and they] also mason for themselves a little fireplace on deck.[11]

Interestingly, John Lawson tells us that the Sewee of coastal South Carolina also outfitted boats with sails and on one occasion set out for England (but were picked up by a British vessel and sold as slaves).[12]

The arrival of the Europeans undoubtedly interfered with ancient patterns of communication while stimulating migrations and forced relocations. Of special interest to us is the struggle over the fur trade and the possession of European guns. In this the coastal Wapanakamikok people were at a disadvantage, both because of the early depletion (or relative absence) of *temakwe* (beaver) in their areas and because European settlers preferred to sell arms to Natives farther removed from white settlements.

The English very early established a trading post on Kent Island and also, by the 1620's, were trading up the Potomac as far as Anakoshtak (Washington, D.C.). This, in turn, led to inter-Native warfare as northern groups (usually Iroquoian-speaking) sought to control the Anakoshtak region and to reach Kent Island. The Mengwe (Andaste or Susquehanna) were very successful in the latter objective and would appear to have become very aggressive and highly unified by 1620-1625. Their control of the Susquehanna watershed and alliance with the Black Mengwe of the Pittsburg region gave them ready access to beaver pelts, while their navigation in the upper Chesepeake (recorded by Smith) gave them access to Kent Island. When the Dutch began to trade along the Delaware River in the 1620's the Andaste were quick to comprehend the necessity of possessing an outlet in that quarter also. From that date until ca. 1638 they waged frequent campaigns against the Renape-Lenape of the Delaware River, with particular attention to the Philadelphia-Camden region. They also attacked the Renape groups of western and eastern Maryland, and, in both cases, succeeded eventually in forcing the Wapanakamikok groups into becoming "satellites" or "tributaries." Eventually the Andaste dominated the interior trade as far south as the Occaneechee (southside Virginia) and were the best suppliers of the Dutch and Swedes along the Delaware River.

During the war years (1620's-1630's) many Wapanakamikok groups were forced to abandon their homelands due to sustained Andaste attacks. In 1633 David DeVries met 50 Andaste at Fort Nassau (Gloucester County) who were expecting 600 more warriors. Shortly thereafter the Dutch met three Armewamen fugitives who said that they

> had been plundered of all their corn, their houses had been burnt and they had escaped in great want . . . the main body of their people were about five or six hours' journey distant . . . They told us also, that the Minquas had killed about ninety men of the Sankiekans . . . [at Trenton].[13]

The Mantes or Mantwa (Mantua) were at that date living below Fort Nassau but in the 1650's Lindestrom noted that the area at the falls and above

> is mostly inhabited by the Mantess [or], which nation is the rightful owner of the east side of the river, bondmen and servants in this [Delaware] river, and the river was formerly mostly occupied by these savages, yet this nation is now much died off and diminished through war and also through disease.[14]

In 1634 Thomas Young learned that the Delaware River Renape

> were at war with a certain nation called the Minquaoes, who had killed many of them, destroyed their corn, and burned their houses; in so much as that the inhabitants had wholly left that side of the river which was next to their enemies, and had retired themselves on the other side, far up into the woods, the better to secure themselves from their enemies.

Young met a canoe full of "Minquaos" on the river who said

> that they were lately come from war with other Indians, whom they had overcome, and slain some of them, and cut down their corn . . .

From some Renape contacted further upstream at the falls Young learned

> that some few day's journey beyond the rocks...there was a mountainous country, where there were great store of elks, and that before the war with the Minquaos they were wont to go thither to hunt them.

The king wanted Young to stay four or five days because they expected a new attack

from the Andaste who would "pass over the river to assault them . . ."[15]

Thus it is very clear that the west side of the Delaware was abandoned by Renape-Lenape in the 1630's and that dislocations remained apparent even in the 1650's. It is also highly likely that the region which is now the northern part of the state of Delaware was depopulated.[16] Frank H. Stewart, a local historian, noted that:

> The conflict of 1623-1634 drove the Unalachtigos [Southern Renape-Lenape], who lived on the west shore of the Delaware, down into the Chesapeake Peninsula, and those on the eastern shore to the Cape and the Coast [of New Jersey].

Stewart also notes that the "Unalachtigo . . . said Renape instead of Lenape." These people also probably known (as stated above) as the Narraticons, were called Chickohocki in 1759 when some of them migrated westward to Pennsylvania.[17]

It seems clear that some "L" dialect speakers pushed down into the Eastern Shore (or were already there). By 1693 the place-name Mispillen is recorded for Kent County, Delaware. It may well be that the Gingaskin of Northampton County, Virginia also spoke an "L" dialect. In ca. 1862 it was said that Mollie Stephens, the last "queen" of the Gingaskin could not pronounce an "R" sound, using the "L" instead.[18]

Mantwa or Matwa Indians also show up in northeastern Maryland, causing some concern to the authorities.[19] Maryland Indians also sought homes in northern Virginia, as with the Doegs pushing from the Potomac to Caroline County, the Nanziaticos shifting from the Washington, D.C. region to the Rappahannock River, and the Potopako (Port-tobago) apparently moving from Charles County, Maryland to the Rappahannock opposite the Nanziatico. Similarly, Wicomico people may have moved south across the Potomac. Some, still later, may have crossed to the Eastern shore.

But not all migrations were from north to south. After the 1680's (and the defeat of the Andaste in 1675-6) it became possible for Renape groups from Maryland and Virginia to move north, provided only that they accepted the overlordship of the Onondaga, Cayuga, and Seneca (conquerors of the Andaste). White population pressures accelerated this trend and between ca. 1710 and 1750 many "Conoys" (Maryland Renape) and Nanticokes (Eastern Shore people) moved to the Susquehanna watershed.

As white settlers occupied the Susquehanna and pushed west towards Pittsburg it became perhaps more difficult for Renape to move straight north, and some began to appear along the Delaware River and even in New Jersey.

Shortly after 1758 a reservation was established at Edge-Pillock or Pelick (Achepelik) in New Jersey.

> The reservation was called Brotherton because there were so many different tribes represented: Munsees, Nanticokes, Unalachitigos, Unamis, Raritans, Narragansetts, Montauks, Mohegans, Pequots, Nehantics, Conoys, Tutelos, Saponeys, Shinacocks.[20]

Thus some Potomac River Renape as well as Eastern Shore people were present in New Jersey.

In the administration of Governor William Franklin (1763-1776):

> certain Indians, to the number of twenty-one belonging to some tribe in the colony of Virginia or Maryland, had been lately taken under the protection of the Government of Pennsylvania and had for some secret reason been sent over to Gloucester County, under the pretense of having them again removed within a few days. This not being done as agreed the petitioners requested that the Governor cause it to be accomplished.[21]

This may well represent the beginnings of the Virginia Renape settlement in and about Camden, New Jersey. It may also have something to do with the fact that a large group of Pamunkey Indians decided to leave Virginia and wintered in Stafford County prior to disappearing. This latter event is alleged to have occurred in ca. 1800 but it could have been somewhat earlier.

In any case, it is interesting to note that at a time when many Native People of New Jersey vacated the state (1802 and earlier) to go to Ohio and New York (and from there to Wisconsin), other Renape people moved in to take their place. Why did this occur? Simply because the slave societies of Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia proved to be

intolerable places for a good many Native Americans. Thus New Jersey and adjoining Pennsylvania became a haven for Renape people seeking to live in a society which, relatively speaking, was far more open and tolerant. Communities from Virginia and Delaware then became established places such as Camden, Gloucester and Bridgeton, New Jersey, and in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

During the interval, it should be noted, the "R" dialect largely disappeared from the Delaware River. William Penn used an "R" trade jargon in 1683 but vocabulary found in the "Salem Survey" of 1684 is entirely "L." Nonetheless, a few examples of the use of "R" survive into this period. In 1675 the chief of Sawkin was Renowewan and in 1677 he (called Rennowighwan) participated in the sale of land in the Rancocas — Big Timber Creek area. In 1688 one Romasickamen was a seller of land along the Raritan River, and Arasapha was the seller of Cooper's Ferry (Camden) to the Cooper family (year not stated).[22]

Still much later, in 1793, the militia lists for Burlington County, New Jersey, include a number of possible Indian names. Among them is Joseph Tarrapin. The marriage records of Gloucester County include unions between Samuel Kid and Amy Tarripin (1805), and Amos Willis and Elizabeth Tarapin (1808). This is rather interesting because terapin, toropin, etc. is the Renape term for a kind of turtle (tulapin in the "L" dialect).[23]

The Terrapin family may have been local New Jersey Renape people or, possibly, a migrant family from Virginia.

In summary, the Wapanakamikok people have been forced to do a great deal of moving about since 1607. The Lenape dialect is today spoken primarily in Oklahoma and Canada and descendents of Wapanakamikok groups are scattered in Wisconsin and Kansas as well. At the same time, however, other Native People have remained near their old homes or have migrated within the North Carolina-to-New Hampshire region. Thus it is not at all surprising that we find an organized Renape group in New Jersey, along with other Indian groups from the Hudson River Valley (the Ramapough people) and from Delaware (the Nanticoke group).

Although forced to move in many different directions, Renape-Lenape-Nenape people continue to survive and to preserve their identity, whether in rural areas or major industrial centers. In this process of moving about, old republics and alliances have disappeared to be replaced by new groupings such as the "Cherokee Delawares" of northeastern Oklahoma, the Caddo-Wichita-Delawares of western Oklahoma, the Muncey of Kansas, the Stockbridge-Muncey of Wisconsin, the Delaware-Nanticoke component of the Grand River Iroquois in Canada, the Powhatan-Renape Nation of Delaware Valley in New Jersey and many others.

We can be sure that the social and political evolution of the Renape-Lenape-Nenape people has not come to an end and that the future will bring still more change.

Footnotes

[1]Jack D. Forbes, *Wapanakamikok Language Relationships* (Davis: Tecumseh Center, 1972), p. 15.
[2]Forbes, *Ibid.*, p. 14.
[3]John P. Harrington, "The Original Strachey Vocabulary of the Virginia Indian Languages," *Bureau of American Ethnology Bulletin* 157, p. 195.
[4]J. Hammond Trumbull, *Historical Magazine*, 1870, v. VII, 2nd ser., p. 46; and Trumbull, "Notes on Forth Versions of the Lord's Prayer . . .," *Transactions* of the American Philological Association, 1872, v. III-IV, p. 119.
[5]Peter Lindestrom, *Geographia Americae*, ed. by Amandus Johnson (Philadelphia: Swedish Colonial Society, 1925), pp. 204, 208, 229.
[6]David DeVries, in Albert Cook Myers, ed., *Narratives of Early Pennsylvania, West New Jersey, and Delaware 1630-1707* (New York: Scribner's, 1912), pp. 16, 24.
[7]Myers *Ibid.*, pp. 87, 156.
[8]Myers, *Ibid.*, p. 230. See also 1656 map by A. Vanderdonck in front of William A. Whitehead, ed., *New Jersey Under the Proprietary Governments* (Newark: Dennis, 1875). The "Ermomex" are near Medford.
[9]Whitehead, *Ibid.* The Naraticons are the dominant "tribe" of Salem County, New Jersey.
[10]Relation of Thomas Yong, in Myers, *Ibid.*, pp. 38-39.
[11]Lindestrom, *Ibid.*, pp. 237-8. See also Whitehead, *Ibid.* A map of 1656 locates the "Aquauachuques" in south central New Jersey. Had they fled there from the eastern shore or had Smith erred in their location in 1607?
[12]John Lawson, *History of North Carolina* (Garrett and Massie, 1952), p. 7.
[13]Devries, Meyers. op.cit., pp. 23-24.
[14]Lindestrom, Peter. op.cit., p. 165.
[15]Thomas Young in Myers, *Ibid.*, pp. 38-41.
[16]*Ibid.*, p. 37. In 1651 the Mengwe sold the Dutch the region from Minqua (Christina) Creek southwards to Bompt-Hook, embracing the Newcastle region. In 1652 the Mengwe ceded to the English the eastern shore down to the Choptank River and the western shore down to the Patuxent. John Leed Bozeman, *The History of Maryland* (Baltimore: Lucas and Deaver, n.d.) v. I, pp. 451-52, 481.
[17]Frank H. Stewart, *Indians of Southern New Jersey* (Port Washington: Kennikat Press, n.d.), pp. 26, 30, 37.
[18]Delaware tax rolls 1665-1693, microfilm; and Thomas T. Upshur, "Eastern Shore History," *Virginia Historical Magazine*, v. 9 (1901-02), p. 92.
[19]As early as 1653 the Mathua were trading with the Patuxent in Maryland. Bozeman, *op.cit.*, v. I, p. 467. Interestingly, the Oxendine family of North Carolina is probably Lenape in origin. The Exendine name is found in Oklahoma, along with Secondine.
[20]Stewart, *op.cit.*, p. 38
[21]Stewart, *Ibid.*, p. 20-21.
[22]Stewart, *op.cit.*, pp. 11ff, 60, 86, 87, 88.
[23]Evesham Township *New Jersey in 1793* and Craig, *Gloucester County Marriages*.